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EXTRACT

FROM

The Thirtieth VOLUME

OF THE

Chriſtian - Library.

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My Dear BRETHREN,

THE following is an Extract from the Thirtieth Volume of The Chriſtian Library, *publiſhed by Mr.* WESLEY, *and what I read on* New-Year's Day *at renewing our Covenant with* GOD.

In the principal Places on that Day, at Two in the Afternoon, firſt we have Preaching; afterwards the Society, whether of Town or Country, ſtay behind, and, after Singing and Prayer, I read the following Piece, and the People ſit till I come to the Covenanting and Prayer, when the People ſtand up or kneel down, and in a ſolemn Manner renew their Covenant-Relationſhip with the LORD; *then conclude with hearty Prayer for ourſelves, for the Church of* GOD, *and for Mankind in general; and that we may walk nearer to* GOD *thro'* CHRIST *for the future.*

It has always been an uncommon Season both to me and the People. I ſhould therefore deſire the Practice might become general wherever a Preacher can be preſent; and even in little Country Places, ſhould deſire the Leader and Society to meet, and, after Singing and Prayer, to read and renew their Covenant with GOD.

A Deſire to promote the general Good of Souls, is the ſole Motive of requeſting that this might be publiſhed. I am,

Dear BRETHREN,

Your Friend and Brother in the Goſpel of CHRIST JESUS,

THO. LEE.

SHEFFIELD,
December 10, 1779.

Extract from the 30th Volume of The Chriſtian Library.

I. *Reſign, and deliver up yourſelves to* GOD *in* CHRIST.

YIELD *yourſelves to the* LORD, that is, as his Servants, give up the Dominion and Government of yourſelves to CHRIST. *Neither yield your Members, as Inſtruments of Unrighteouſneſs unto Sin, but yield yourſelves to* GOD, *as thoſe that are alive from the Dead, and your Members, as Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs unto* GOD. *To whom ye yield yourſelves Servants to obey, his Servants you are, to whom you obey.* Yield yourſelves ſo to the LORD, that you may henceforth be the LORD's; *I am thine*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt. Thoſe that yield themſelves to Sin, and the World, their Hearts ſay, Sin, I am thine; World, I am thine; Riches, I am yours; Pleaſures, I am yours: I am thine, ſaith the Pſalmiſt; devoted to thy Fear, dedicated to thy Service; I am thine, ſave me: Give yourſelves to CHRIST; Sinners, be devoted to his Fear.

And this giving yourſelves to him muſt be ſuch, as ſuppoſes that you be heartily contented;

1. That he appoint you your Work.

2. That he appoint you your Station.

1. That he appoint you your Work; that he put you to whatſoever he pleaſeth: Servants, as they muſt do their Maſter's Work, ſo they muſt do that Work which their Maſter appoints them; they muſt be for any Work their Maſter hath for them to do, they muſt not pick and chuſe, this I will do, and that I will not do; they muſt not ſay, this is too hard, or this is too mean, or this may be well enough let alone: Good Servants, when they have choſen their Maſter, will let their Maſter chuſe their Work, and will not diſpute his Will, but do it.

CHRIST hath many Services to be done, ſome are more eaſy and honourable, others more difficult and diſgraceful; ſome are ſuitable to our Inclinations and Intereſts, others are contrary to both: In ſome we may pleaſe CHRIST and pleaſe ourſelves, as when he requires us to feed, and cloath ourſelves, to provide things honeſt for our own Maintenance, yea, and there are ſome Spiritual Duties that are more pleaſing than others; as to rejoice in the LORD, to be Bleſſing and Praiſing of GOD, to be feeding ourſelves with the Delights and Comforts of Religion; theſe are the ſweet Works of a Chriſtian. But then there are other Works, wherein we cannot pleaſe CHRIST, but by denying ourſelves, as giving and lending, bearing and forbearing, reproving Men for their Sins, withdrawing from their Company, witneſſing againſt their Wickedneſs, confeſſing CHRIST and his Name, when it will coſt us Shame and Reproach; ſailing againſt the Wind, ſwimming

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againſt the Tide, ſteering contrary to the Time; parting with our Eaſe, our Liberties, and Accommodations for the Name of our Lord JESUS.

It is neceſſary, Beloved, to ſit down and conſider what it will coſt you to be the Servants of CHRIST, and take a thorough Survey of the whole Buſineſs of Chriſtianity, and not engage Hand over Head, to you know not what.

Firſt, See what it is that CHRIST doth expect, and then yield yourſelves to his whole Will: Do not think of compounding, or making your own Terms with CHRIST, that will never be allowed you.

Go to CHRIST, and tell him, Lord JESUS, if thou wilt receive me into thy Houſe, if thou wilt but own me as thy Servant, I will not ſtand upon Terms; impoſe on me what Conditions thou pleaſeſt, write down thine own Articles, command me what thou wilt, put me to any Thing thou ſeeſt good; let me come under thy Roof let me be thy Servant, and ſpare not to command me; I will be no longer mine own, but give u myſelf to thy Will in all Things.

2. That he ſhall appoint you your Station ar Condition; whether it be higher or lower, proſperous or afflicted State: Be content t CHRIST ſhould both chuſe your Work, a chuſe your Condition; that he ſhould have Command of you, and the Diſpoſal of yc Make me what thou wilt, LORD, and ſet where thou wilt; let me be a Veſſel of Silve Gold, or a Veſſel of Wood or Stone, ſo I Veſſel of Honour; of whatſoever Form or M

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whether higher or lower, finer or coarfer, I am content; if I be not the Head, or the Eye, or the Ear, one of the nobler and more honourable Inſtruments thou wilt employ, let me be the Hand, or the Foot, one of the moſt laborious, and loweſt, and moſt contemptible of all the Servants of my LORD, let my Dwelling be on the Dunghill, my Portion in the Wilderneſs, my Name and my Lot be amongſt the Hewers of Wood, or Drawers of Water, among the Doorkeepers of thy Houſe; any where, where I may be ſerviceable; I put myſelf wholly into thy Hands: Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt; put me to doing, put me o ſuffering, let me be employed for thee, or laid ſide for thee, exalted for thee, or trodden under oot for thee; let me be full, let me be empty, t me have all things, let me have nothing, I eely, and heartily reſign all to thy Pleaſure and iſpoſal.

This is cloſing with CHRIST, as your King d Sovereign LORD; and in this is included, ur renouncing the Devil and his Works, the th and its Luſts; together with your conſent- to all the Laws and Ordinances of CHRIST, his providential Government.

eloved, ſuch a Cloſe with CHRIST as you here been exhorted to, is that wherein the nce of Chriſtianity lies; when you have n the incorruptible Crown, that is, when ave choſen GOD to be your Portion and ineſs; when you have adventured, and laid ur whole Intereſt, and all your Hopes with ST, caſting yourſelf wholly upon the Merits Righteouſneſs; when you have underſtand-

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ingly and heartily reſigned, and given up yourſelves to him, reſolved for ever to be at his Command, and at his Diſpoſal; then you are Chriſtians indeed, and never till then. CHRIST will be the Saviour of none but of his Servants; he is the Author of eternal Salvation to thoſe that obey him; CHRIST will have no Servants but by Conſent; his People are a willing People; and CHRIST will accept of no Conſent but in full to all that he requires; he will be all in all, or he will be nothing.

II. *Confirm and compleat all this by ſolemn Covenant.*

Give yourſelves to the LORD as his Servants, and bind yourſelves to him as his Covenant-Servants.

Upon your entering into Covenant with GOD, the Covenant of GOD ſtands firm to you; GOD gives you Leave, every Man, to put in his own Name into the Covenant-Grant; if it be not found there at laſt, it will be your own Fault; if it be not there, there will be nothing found in the whole Covenant belonging unto you; if it be there, all is yours; if you have come into the Bond of the Covenant, you ſhall have your Share in the Bleſſings of the Covenant. *Deuteronomy* xxvi. 17, 18. *Thou haſt avouched the* LORD *this Day to be thy* GOD, *to walk in his Ways, and to keep his Statutes, and his Commandments, and his Judgments, to hearken to his Voice. And the* LORD *hath avouched thee this Day to be his peculiar People, as he hath promiſed thee.* Obſerve it, The ſame Day that they avouched the LORD to be their GOD,

GOD, the ſame Day the LORD avoucheth them to be his peculiar People: The ſame Day that they engage to keep the Commandments of GOD, the ſame Day the LORD engageth to keep his Promiſe with them.

There is a two-fold Covenanting with GOD, *In Profeſſion, in Reality:* An entering our Names, or an engaging our Hearts: The former is done in Baptiſm, by all that are baptized, who by receiving that Seal of the Covenant, are viſibly, or in Profeſſion, entered into it: The latter is alſo two-fold:

1. VIRTUAL. Which is done by all thoſe that have ſincerely made that Cloſure with GOD in CHRIST: Thoſe that have choſen the LORD, embarked with CHRIST, reſigned up, and given themſelves to the LORD, are all engaged Perſons, and have virtually covenanted with him.

2. FORMAL. Which is our binding ourſelves to the LORD by ſolemn Vow or Promiſe to ſtand to our Choice. And this may be, either only inward in the Soul; or outward, and expreſſed either by Words, liſting up of the Hand, ſubſcribing the Hand, or the like: And that by how much the more expreſs and ſolemn our covenanting with GOD is, by ſo much the more ſenſibly and ſtrongly is it like to hold our Hearts to him.

Now that which I would perſuade you to, is this ſolemn and expreſs covenanting with GOD. Providence hath lately brought to my Hand the Advice of a dear Friend and faithful Labourer in the Work of the LORD about this Matter; which having found great Acceptance with many,

I do with much Zeal, for the eſtabliſhing of Souls in Holineſs and Comfort, commend it to the Uſe not only of young Converts, but of the more grown Chriſtians, that have not experimented this or the like Courſe.

And in order to the putting this Matter into Practice, I ſhall give you theſe few Directions,

Firſt, Set apart ſome Time, more than once, to be ſpent in ſecret before the LORD.

1. In ſeeking earneſtly his ſpecial Aſſiſtance and gracious Acceptance of you.

2. In conſidering diſtinctly all the Conditions of the Covenant, as they have been laid before you.

3. In ſearching your Hearts whether you either have already, or can now freely make ſuch a Cloſure with GOD in CHRIST, as you have been exhorted to. In ſpecial conſider what your Sins are, and examine whether you can reſolve to forego them all. Conſider what the Laws of CHRIST are, how holy, ſtrict, and ſpiritual, and whether you can upon Deliberation make Choice of them all, (even thoſe that moſt croſs your Intereſts and corrupt Inclinations) as the Rule of your whole Life. Be ſure you be clear in theſe Matters, ſee that you do not lie unto God.

Secondly, Compoſe your Spirits into the moſt ſerious Frame poſſible, ſuitable to a Tranſaction of ſo high Importance.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Lay hold on the Covenant of GOD, and rely upon his Promiſe of giving Grace and Strength, whereby you may be enabled to perform your Promiſe. Truſt not to your own Strength, to the Strength of your own Reſolutions, but take hold on his Strength.

Fourthly, Reſolve to be faithful. Having engaged your Hearts, opened your Mouths, and ſubſcribed with your Hands to the LORD, reſolve in his Strength never to go back.

Laſtly, Being thus prepared, on ſome convenient Time ſet apart for the Purpoſe, ſet upon the Work; and in the moſt ſolemn Manner poſſible, as if the LORD were viſibly preſent before your Eyes, fall down on your Knees, and ſpreading forth your Hands towards Heaven, open your Hearts to the LORD.

F I N I S.